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Intelligence Panel, Set Up Last Year, Still Faces Major Battles on Control of Agencies

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WASHINGTON, April 25—One year after the Senate intelligence committee issued its final report, its recommendations for controlling the intelligence agencies still have not become law, the oversight committee it led to still is not fully organized and important legislative battles remain to be fought.

Yet many congressional and intelligence sources insist that important changes have taken place in the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and that, for the moment, at least, many of the abuses cited in the seven-volume report have been curbed.

"There's no question that a lot of things that were done in the past are not being done any longer," said a Congressional staff member who was involved in the inquiries. "But the next six months could be important, because we'll find out how many of the recommendations will be put into law."

In its April 26, 1976, report, the committee headed by Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, made nearly 100 recommendations for curbing abuses that included illegal wiretaps, break-ins, surveillance and opening of mail, overt harassment of political dissidents, assassination plots against foreign leaders and smear campaigns against civil rights activists.

Recommendations in Effect

Even before the report was published, some of the recommendations had been incorporated into an executive order issued by President Ford; in the past year many more have been imposed on the F.B.I. by Justice Department directives.

"The problem with executive orders is that they change with the circumstances, and administrations, depending on the view of the President," Mr. Church said in a recent interview. "It was the conclusion of my committee that legislation ought to be written."

Such legislation is being crafted in the crowded, converted auditorium of the Dirksen Senate Office Building here, where the staff of the permanent Senate Intelligence Committee, headed by Senator Daniel Inouye, Democrat of Hawaii, has its headquarters.

A subcommittee headed by Senator Walter D. Huddleston, Democrat of Kentucky, is trying to draft a new charter for the C.I.A. and other agencies that would, according to committee sources, attempt to lock into statute many of the Church committee's proposed reforms.

Sanctions Are Sought

At the same time, Stansfield Turner, the new Director of Central Intelligence, has picked up the cry of many intelligence officers for stiffer sanctions, possibly including criminal penalties, against persons who disclose classified material or divulge intelligence sources and methods.

The proposals to curb intelligence agency abuses, as well as the ones to curb unauthorized disclosures, are likely to be debated this summer against a backdrop of charges and controversies that have been simmering during the past year.

As the first anniversary of the Church committee report approaches, a former C.I.A. head, Richard Helms, is the target of a Federal grand jury investigation into possible perjury and obstruction of justice; a former F.B.I. supervisor, John Kearney, is under indictment because of allegedly illegal wiretaps and mail-openings by his men; scores of intelligence officers and former intelligence officers are being sued for millions of dollars by individuals who contend that they were subjects of illegal surveillance; and new allegations of wrong-doing and corruption have recently surfaced.

Attack on C.I.A.

Last week, a 12-year veteran of the C.I.A., John R. Stockwell, met with Senate committee staffers and repeated allegations he had written in a blistering letter of resignation. He said that the agency was plagued by petty corruption and incompetence, that C.I.A. officers had gone through agency files to hide material from the Church committee's investigators and that an internal housecleaning was "conspicuously overdue."

A principal recommendation of the Church committee was that a single oversight committee be established in the Senate, with broad powers to monitor and control the agencies.

The committee was established, on May 19, but it, too, has already been criticized by persons who believe it is not moving fast enough or forcefully enough to take hold of the agencies. These critics include a number of staff members of the original Church committee, who complain privately that much of the momentum for change has been lost.

In a letter to Senator Inouye dated March 7, John H. F. Shattuck, the head of the American Civil Liberties Union's Washington office, said his group was disturbed about the committee's performance. In particular, he asserted that Mr.

Turner, at his confirmation hearings, "was virtually invited by the committee to draft legislation making it a crime for intelligence agency employees to disclose classified information," even if the information concerned illegal, unconstitutional or incompetent actions by the agencies. "Most Troubling Problem"

Senator Inouye, in a reply to Mr. Shattuck, denied that either he or the committee had taken a position on such legislation, which he termed "perhaps the most troubling and fundamental problem facing this committee."

On the surface, there have been few signs of activity by the committee, which has gone to great lengths to keep its workings secret and to say as little as

possible about even routine actions.

Question, by a reporter:

"What can you say about your meeting?"

Answer, by the committee's spokesman, Spencer Davis:

"It's adjourned."

But committee sources say privately that a good deal of work is being done particularly at the staff level. The C.I.A. charter is being drafted, they say. The intelligence community budget is being examined in detail for the first time, and hearings will soon be held on whether to make public the overall expenditure.

A report on allegedly improper surveillance activities in Micronesia will soon be released, they say, and staff investigators have begun to examine Mr. Stockwell's allegations.

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